

The Life Education Center

The Life Education Center (LEC) program teaches students in kindergarten through high school the benefits of making sound, healthy choices for their bodies and minds.

Two mobile units travel to 61 public and private schools in Kankakee and Iroquois counties -- reaching approximately 14,000 students annually.

The LEC's curriculum aligns with Illinois State Standards. Instructors use hands-on materials, visuals, discussion and role playing to teach students about the human body, the dangers of its abuse and about the different skills needed to deal with peer pressure. TAM, a transparent anatomical mannequin, teaches the younger students about their bodies and provides older students with an inside view of how chemical substances harm the body. LEC mascot, Harold the Giraffe and his friend, Jocko the Monkey, are favorites with the younger students who learn the importance of exercise and eating good foods.

The LEC also provides a forum for older students. A three-part research-based curriculum proven to delay the onset of alcohol use is taught to 6th, 7th and 8th grade students at participating schools and "Class Action" is being used with high school students. Junior and senior high school students, along with their parents, are encouraged to make a pledge to follow and support laws prohibiting underage alcohol use in the Partnership's annual "*Make a Pledge - Make It Stick*" social marketing campaign.

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**Life Education Centers
Pledge for Life Partnership**

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Parents of Sixth Graders

The health, social, criminal justice and academic problems that can result from underage drinking, along with the uniformed belief that underage alcohol use is simply a "rite of passage" signify the importance of prevention efforts. These problems signify the importance of communicating to our children the serious -- if not deadly -- consequences that may result from alcohol use. Alcohol accidents are the leading cause of death for young people ages 15-24.

Lessons focus on deterring underage drinking and identifying and confronting bullying. We encourage you to talk to your child about these lessons and to add your own family values.

Topics covered include:

- ▲ Truths and fallacies about alcohol.
- ▲ Consequences of drinking and alternatives to drinking.
- ▲ Effects of alcohol on the body.
- ▲ Advertising techniques used to entice people to drink alcohol.
- ▲ Identifying the bully, victim and bystander roles.
- ▲ Suggestions for dealing with bullying including opportunities to resolve bullying problems and situations.
- ▲ Ways to create "*Wise Highs*" and have fun without drugs and alcohol.

Review Questions

We encourage you to ask your child what he or she has learned in the Life Education Center. Asking the following questions will help your child share what he's learned in class. We've also included answers to help you guide them.

What happens to the body when alcohol is consumed?

Alcohol is a depressant. It slows down the nervous system and hinders reflex actions. Alcohol also scars the liver which may lead to cirrhosis of the liver. Children who begin drinking at an earlier age are more likely to develop a substance abuse problem later in life.

Can you recall some ways advertisers try to make alcohol more appealing?

- 1. Image Appeal -- Drinking makes people more appealing.*
- 2. Popularity Appeal -- People who drink have more friends.*
- 3. Deal Appeal -- Discounts, rebates and free gifts.*
- 4. Slogan Appeal -- Using catchy phrases and music for product recognition.*
- 5. Celebrity Endorsement -- Hiring famous people to sell their products.*

How should you handle a bullying situation?

- 1. Be assertive by using "I" statements and body language.*
- 2. Stay calm and walk away.*
- 3. Use humor to diffuse the situation.*
- 4. Talk to someone about the problem.*

What is the bystander role in a bullying situation? *Someone who sees what is occurring and has the opportunity to assist by either reporting the problem to an authority figure and/or being supportive to the victim by offering friendship or inclusion.*

What can happen if a bullying situation is ignored? *The "victim" may become seriously depressed and cause harm to himself or others; the "bully" may continue the behavior until he or she is faced with criminal charges; and the "bystander" may become fearful to go to certain places or people.*

Follow-up Activities

The following activities can be used to reinforce the lessons taught in the Life Education Center.

- ▲ Discuss and make a plan with your child as to what he or she can do if put in a situation where alcohol or drugs are involved.
- ▲ Ask your child to tell you about an advertisement they like and what technique was used to make it appealing.
- ▲ Discuss bullying situations and reasons why it is wrong to ridicule and isolate anyone.

These are just a few ways that we can teach our children how special they are and how important it is for them to take care of their bodies and minds. These discussions will later help them to choose **Wise Highs...Choices You Can Live With!** To visit the LEC or to learn more, call Brenda Wetzel, director of Life Education programs, at 815 936-4606.